

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-05 IO-10

AID-05 OMB-01 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 /072 W

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O R 202315Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9643

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 4780

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MILI, ES, HO

SUBJECT: HONDURAN CONCERNS REGARDING SALVADORAN MILITARY INTENTIONS

REF: TGALPA 5007

1. THE MANEUVERS MENTIONED IN REFTEL, CONDUCTED DURING THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 10-14, TOOK PLACE IN THE REGION BETWEEN ANAMOROS AND SANTA ROSA DE LIMA, LA UNION DEPARTMENT. THE EXERCISE, WITH US MILGP ADVISORS IN ATTENDANCE, INVOLVED APPROXIMATELY 2000 MEN, NOT 7000 AS DESCRIBED BY HONDURAN AIR FORCE COMMANDER PARA 2 REFTEL. THE SALVADORAN TROOPS WERE NEVER CLOSER THAN TEN KILOMETERS TO THE EASTERN FRONTIER, A DISTANCE THAT MUST BE VIEWED IN TERMS OF THE MINISCULE SIZE OF THE COUNTRY AND THE FACT THAT MANEUVERS COULD NOT BE HELD AT ANY POINT IN THE ENTIRE TERRITORY MORE THAN FIFTY KILOMETERS AWAY FROM THE BORDER.

2. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT THE TWO MILITARIES HAD SCHEDULED A BORDER MEETING FOR THIS WEEK, WHICH WAS BY THE HONDURANS PORT-
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PONED FOR UNKNOWN REASONS. THE SALVADORAN CHIEF OF STAFF IS

ATTEMPTING TO RESCHEDULE IT FOR NEXT WEEK.

3. AS THE REFTTEL STATES, AND AS THE GOH HAS OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED, EL SALVADOR HAD PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED THE HONDURAN GOVERNMENT, SOME TWO WEEKS BEFOREHAND, THAT IT WAS ABOUT TO CONDUCT A NORMAL MILITARY EXERCISE IN THE EASTERN ZONE. THIS WAS IN ACCORDANCE WITH AGREEMENTS OF PRIOR NOTIFICATION (TO AVOID JUST SUCH ALARM) REACHED BY MOLINA AND MELGAR IN RECENT COS MEETINGS.

4. COMMENT: THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT THE GOES HAS GIVEN EVERY INDICATION THAT IT WISHES TO AVOID INCIDENTS ALONG THE BORDER, OR THE SEMBLANCE OF THREATENING GESTURES SUCH AS MILITARY MANEUVERS, IN THE BORDER AREA. THIS ACCOUNTS FOR THE GOES PRIOR NOTIFICATION ON THESE EXERCISES, AND THE FACT THAT THE FORCES DID NOT APPROACH THE FRONTIER. THE REFTTEL SUGGESTS THAT IT MIGHT BE USEFUL FOR BOTH EMBASSIES TO "DISCREETLY URGE" FURTHER BORDER MEETINGS BETWEEN THE TWO MILITARIES. IT IS OUR BELIEF THAT NO SUCH PRODDING IS NECESSARY ON THIS SIDE AND THAT THE SERIES OF MEETINGS WILL CONTINUE ON THE STRENGTH OF THEIR OWN USEFULNESS. WHILE THEIR FREQUENCY HAS DIMINISHED OF LATE, WE BELIVE THIS IS MORE A FACTOR OF AGREEMENTS HAVING ALREADY BEEN REACHED AT PREVIOUS MEETNNGS ON MOST ISSUES THAT THE TWO MILITARIES ARE COMPETENT TO RESOLVE, AND THAT THE PRESIDENTIAL GET-TOGETHERS HAVE OBIATED THE NEED FOR AS MANY LOWER LEVEL TALKS. ON THE QUESTION OF THE COMMITTEE OF SEVER, IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT AT THE OCT. 30 COS MEETING IN GUATEMALA, MOLINA AND MELGAR AGREED THAT THE TWO COUNTRIES WOULD PROCEED ON A BILATERAL BASIS TO RESOLVE THEIR DIFFERENCES. WE AGREE THAT THIS APPROACH AFFORDS THE BEST CHANCE OF NORMILATIONS. SINCE THIS IS THE CASE, WE DO NOT FEEL THAT USG INSISTANCE THAT THE COMMITTEE BE USED AS A FALLBACK POSITION SHOULD BILATERAL EFFORTS FAIL WOULD BE PRO- DUCTIVE AT THIS TIME.

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